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Army Chief Rejects 3-Year Cut In Calley Sentence to 17 Years

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WASHINGTON, May 14—The Secretary of the Army, Robert F. Froehlke, turned down today parole board recommendations that he trim three years from the 20-year sentence of First Lieut. William L. Calley Jr.

The rejection came on Mr. Froehlke's last day on the job. Tomorrow he will be replaced by former representative Howard H. Calloway, Republican of Georgia.

Lieutenant Calley was the only person convicted of the mass killings at the South Vietnamese hamlet of My Lai on March 16, 1968. His sentence of life in prison was shortened to 20 years by the commander of the Third Army at Fort McPherson, Ga.

A recommendation to trim it further—to 17 years—had been made by the Army-Air Force Clemency and Parole Board. It was this recommendation that was turned down today.

Separate Appeal

Pentagon spokesmen said the action today was entirely separate from Calley's appeal of his conviction for the premeditated murder of at least 22

Vietnamese civilians and assault with intent to murder a Vietnamese child.

Calley's conviction was first appealed to the Court of Military Review, which denied relief earlier this year.

The case has now gone to the United States Court of Military Appeals, which will decide by May 23 whether to review the conviction. Lawyers for the lieutenant say more than 30 errors were made in his original trial by a military court.

'Time Hangs Heavy'

George W. Latimer, Calley's civilian attorney, said from Salt Lake City in a telephone interview that the young officer was bearing up well—"as good as a fellow in close confinement can take it," Mr. Latimer said. "Time hangs heavy on his hands," he added.

Calley has been confined to his apartment at Fort Benning, Ga., for two years. If his appeals fail, it is expected that he will be sent to the disciplinary barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

His two years of confinement, Mr. Latimer said, are counted as time served on his sentence.